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**NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY**

**NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE**

**THE ROOTS OF MILITARY REFORM:  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
GOLDWATER-NICHOLS DEFENSE REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1986  
AS IT APPLIED TO JCS REORGANIZATION**

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The purpose of this short paper is to briefly examine the roots of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, in order to investigate the political forces at work behind the decision to elevate the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to a position preeminent among the other service chiefs using the bureaucratic politics model as the framework of inquiry. This is but one facet of a large, multifaceted Act that was in itself a part of an even more sweeping initiative to reform the whole of the defense department<sup>1</sup>. Study of the bureaucratic process which led to the Act also leads to understanding of the changing nature of domestic politics, the interagency process, and the influence of the news media, special interest groups, and public opinion.

The Act itself is often cited by more recent authors as the beginning of the demise of civilian control over the military, particularly that part of the act that deals with the reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Eleven years have passed since the implementation of this historic act. It is viewed today as "perhaps the most important defense legislation since World War Two"<sup>2</sup>, widely credited with enabling the spectacular victory in the Gulf War<sup>3</sup>. Viewed by its Senate progenitor as an act of sweeping historic significance<sup>4</sup> and by his Congressional colleagues as a fitting legacy to his decades in government<sup>5</sup>, the roots of the bill are entangled in and inseparable from the conflicts central to the Reagan presidency's defense department buildup. It is a fascinating story of the interaction of determined policy elites, the general public, personalities and their beliefs, the ability of government to rise above itself, and the far-reaching consequences of governmental legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> Snider, Don M., *DOD Reorganization Part I, New Imperatives* Parameters, September 1987, p. 89

<sup>2</sup> Locher, James R. III, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols" *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1996, p. 16  
Locher was a key member of the military reform movement.

<sup>3</sup> Boo, Katherine, "How Congress Won the War in the Gulf" *The Washington Monthly*, October 1991

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, George C., "Defense Reorganization Enacted" *The Washington Post*, September 20, 1986  
Goldwater stated "It's the only Goddamn thing I've done in the Senate that's worth a damn."

<sup>5</sup> Wilson George C., "Goldwater is Right, Colleagues Say" *The Washington Post*, May 10, 1986

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which arguably produced intentionally revolutionary changes in senior military command structure which continue to reverberate in policy arguments over civilian control of the military<sup>6</sup> It is, in short, an excellent example of the bureaucratic politics model and American government in action in the defense arena

The Goldwater-Nichols Act itself, like practically all Congressional legislation, is the inseparable product of a collision between disparate interests, and is the story of individual and bureaucratic struggles for power and influence

The desire for a fundamental change within the structure of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was born of a frustration with the failure of the American military in many joint operating environments during and after the Vietnam War The intellectual underpinnings for military reform, which was the larger issue at work and the vehicle through which transformation of the command structure was attained, grew from the military itself during the mid-to-late 1970's, and originated in studies generally concerned with "reestablishing the primacy of the military mind"<sup>7</sup> over bureaucratic routines as well as informed elite attention to the multiplicity of resources devoted to prosecution of war At the heart of these studies was a desire to assert military control in its proper venue - in tactical and operational-level matters While the desire for a coherent strategy was at the root of many of the studies, as well as a desire and recognition of the need to develop "next war" practice, a search for military primacy and a realistic strategy quickly became transformed into a search for the proper conventional military force structure in the early years of the Reagan presidency's military buildup A separate track focused on the struggles of each service for primacy of mission amid a bureaucratic structure which encouraged service parochialism at the expense of joint success

The bipartisan Congressional Military Reform Caucus (MRC), which attracted a

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<sup>6</sup> Luttwak, Edward N , "Washington's Biggest Scandal" *Commentary*, May 1994

<sup>7</sup> Wirls, Daniel *Buildup The Politics of Defense in the Reagan Era* Ithaca Cornell University Press, 1992, p 61

diverse group of about fifty senators and representatives between 1981 and 1982, was the political manifestation of the power of the reformers arguments, and served as a vehicle through which interested members of congress and their staffs could educate themselves on the issues. Although some legislation was attempted as early as 1981 as a result of such interest, the MRC was too politically diverse and fragmented to do more than discuss and incubate the issues in an environment separate and apart from the more traditional venue for such political action, the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.<sup>8</sup>

A second contributing factor was the focus of the Reagan presidency itself. Recall that Reagan was elected, in part, as a result of the perceived failure of the Carter administration to address equipment related inadequacies within the post-Vietnam American military. The perception of a "hollow force" military - one with only a mere shell of combat power - was widespread. Within months of election, Secretary of Defense Weinberger spearheaded the first of several dramatic military budget increases through a Congress more than willing to provide what was asked for against the backdrop of Soviet military adventurism in Afghanistan. Thus, the intellectual underpinnings of military reform diverged in the early 1980's from a purely military search for a coherent strategy, command and force structure to a more public, broadly based focus on force structure *per se* as issues such as the M-1 tank, C-5 cargo jet and CG-47 Ticonderoga class cruiser came to dominate discussions at the same time intense Congressional interest in competition for the procurement dollars and jobs that flowed from that force development<sup>9</sup> developed. And, in the deluge of money, there was eventually bound to be scandal.

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<sup>8</sup> Wirls, p. 91

<sup>9</sup> Smith, Hedrick, *The Power Game: How Washington Works*. New York: Random House, 1968. Just how fierce the competition was is underscored by a review of the Congressional struggle for Navy ships and homeports as the service surged from 479 to 600 ships.

The focus on conventional force structure was the result of widespread public and Congressional support for a nuclear freeze which was itself a dominant political issue between 1981 and 1984. The perceived strength of the "freeze" movement, although not borne out in the elections of 1984, meant that conventional force structure was emphasized over nuclear force structure. Although there were nuclear force issues always in political play, it was conventional force structure on which a majority of defense dollars were lavished. And, that was by design, as the "hollow force" perception was gained from analysis of the neglect of those forces during the Carter years.

Third, the roots of JCS reform lie in the widespread procurement scandals which increasingly caught the general public's attention during the early 1980's, the period in which President Reagan was rebuilding the nation's armed forces from their post-Vietnam malaise. The amounts of money being appropriated for defense expenditures were staggering, as was the deficit spending necessary to accomplish Reagan's legislative initiatives. Not unexpectedly, the waste and mismanagement inevitably engendered by the flows of such money was equally as staggering, although less generally appreciated early in the decade. While reformers focused early on examples of waste and mismanagement, widespread outrage over the depth of this mismanagement did not become publicly evident until mid-1983, when the scandals over spare parts began to reach the public's ears through forums such as ABC's 20/20<sup>10</sup>, once TV news picked up the story, public reaction was fierce and predictably intense<sup>11</sup>.

While issues such as the nuclear freeze campaign and the Reagan defense buildup were generating intense public interest and resultant Congressional friction, the issues focused on by the military reform movement became to be seen as "win-win" issues -

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<sup>10</sup> Wirls, p. 98

<sup>11</sup> In a later study, (Page, Benjamin I and others, "What Moves Public Opinion?" *The American Political Science Review*, Mar 87), it was noted that public opinion was inordinately sensitive to TV news coverage. The public outrage fueled by the procurement scandal was a powerfully motivating force behind Congressional interest in the subject.

members of the MRC could be both pro-defense and pro-reform. And, Congressional interest was sparked in the MRC because the public was interested. A glance at newspaper editorial columns from across the country collected by Facts on File reveals both the prescience and the depth of the public interest, it was obviously a hot issue<sup>12</sup>. The actions, which in retrospect were encouraged by the Congressional MRC and the various disparate interests within the military reform movement, were not widely acted on until the nuclear freeze movement ebbed in the defeat of its legislative agenda in the fall of 1984<sup>13</sup>. It was in the fall of 1984 and the spring of 1985, when Senator Goldwater replaced Senator Tower, that the MRC's ideas gained the clear intellectual initiative in the Congress.

The bureaucratic politics model, simply put, "emphasizes the political roles and relationships of bureaucracies, agencies and departments, and those that manage them."<sup>14</sup> It recognizes the competition and struggle between those bureaucracies for resources and control, and acknowledges the resultant policy is "characterized by bargaining, accommodation and compromise"<sup>15</sup>.

Talk of military reform was nothing new in the early 1980's. Citing prerogatives enshrined in the Constitution, Congress has always been interested in military command and force structure. Reforms have been nearly continuously proposed and debated within the Congress, but real change has required wide-spread recognition that the national military environment has changed and concomitant agreement and consensus on the structures needed to cope with that change. It has also required individuals willing to take and hold bureaucratic positions at odds with the prevailing wisdom, positions that can entail a significant amount of political risk. And, it nearly always requires bargaining,

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<sup>12</sup> Carol C. Collins, ed., *U.S. Defense Spending: How Much is Enough?* New York: Facts on File, 1983.

<sup>13</sup> Wirls, pp. 88-101.

<sup>14</sup> Kozak, David C., *The Bureaucratic Politics Approach: The Evolution of the Paradigm*, in *Bureaucratic Politics and National Security: Theory and Practice*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988, p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, pp. 5-10.

accommodation and compromise

The National Security Act of 1947 (as variously amended to strengthen the office of the Secretary of Defense throughout the 1950's), was revolutionary in scope, and was one such change that, until 1986, established the national environment in which United States military policy was conducted

For our purposes, what was different in the early 1980's was a growing recognition of the dichotomy between military command structures developed in the nineteenth century that were viewed as no longer capable of successfully dealing with the increasing pace of challenges of the second half of the twentieth century, and whose members observed increasing civilian interference in what was considered the proper realm of military authority. Such recognition received a powerful impetus in the recriminations following the failure in Vietnam, and was renewed and invigorated following the Mayaguez incident and the tragedy at Desert One in Iran.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense, although repeatedly strengthened, seemed unable to adequately and - most importantly - successfully address such issues. Widespread examples of civilian control and interference in issues of military force application were rife, as far as military officers were concerned. At issue was the concept of civilian control of *tactical and operational* military action, a concept which was increasingly seen as contributing to the military failures enumerated earlier. The issue of civilian control over military matters was not the focus - it was civilian control over tactical and operational military action, matters seen as squarely and properly within the purview of military commanders.

Equally important, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as a "committee of equals", seemed unable to provide substantive and meaningful advice to the civilian Secretary of Defense and the President,<sup>16</sup> an issue which the Chiefs were bureaucratically unable to

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<sup>16</sup> Locher, p. 4



overcome as a result of the mandated JCS structure. The service chiefs' traditional focus on parochial interests at the expense of joint success, while understandable in the historical and bureaucratic context, increasingly seemed out of place and anachronistic when faced with repeated short-fused crises that demanded joint warfighting expertise without allowing for the time to train and develop joint expertise. The result was the expectation of a continued litany of failure despite the tremendous defense costs incurred by the Reagan buildup, and an intense desire by military officers and members of the reform movement to overhaul the system.

Even so, while reform caucus members seemed unable to gain the general acknowledgement that the changes they advocated were necessary and worth the cost and uncertainty such reform entailed, the Congress grudgingly began House and Senate hearings into military reform in 1982. However, the committee chairs in the Armed Services Committees stalled reformers' legislation and allowed it to languish without action.

The reformers within the generally younger, increasingly active and diverse Military Reform Caucus, a relatively new way of organizing members of similar interest, were opposed by entrenched groups within the defense bureaucracy, not the least of which were the Committee Chairs of the powerful Senate and House Armed Services Committees, Senator John Tower and Representative Melvin Price, whose members institutionally resented the reformer's interest and activism for encroaching on congressional turf within the traditional purview of their committees<sup>17</sup>.

Although obvious House and Senate interest in defense budget and, to a lesser degree, procurement reform matters continued unabated, that interest was dominated and skillfully manipulated by Executive Branch defense of the status quo, in positions forcefully and articulately advocated by Secretary of Defense Weinberger and Secretary

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<sup>17</sup> Wirls, p. 190

of the Navy Lehman<sup>18</sup> The reform agenda was also obscured by fierce internecine conflict over the nuclear freeze, sustained interest in the spoils of the buildup, and a very real concern, even fear, of Soviet intentions The bitter political fights engendered by the President's "Star Wars" initiative proposed in 1983 led to even further divisiveness, and ensured that little legislative progress was made towards reformer's goals, although the movement continued to gain momentum behind the scenes

Key to our discussion, however, was the issue of fundamental changes within the JCS Early reform discussions had concentrated on radical reforms, such as abolishment of the Joint Chiefs altogether, or abolishment of the Chiefs and replacement with a committee of equal senior officers not service chiefs to provide advice to the national command authority (This initiative briefly reappeared in a Senate bill considered in the autumn of 1985, but rejected in favor of a more moderate approach) Deep-seated service parochialism dating back to the nineteenth century, particularly between the Army and the Navy<sup>19</sup>, was also increasingly considered to be inimical to national military success as the reform movement gained adherents The service chiefs, despite widespread recognition of the problem, were not encouraged by either precedent or bureaucratic structure to boldly develop cooperative and innovative force structures, but were compelled by their service history and service interests to develop independent solutions to what they and their "iron triangles" of service, congress and contractors saw as challenges Even as the battles raged throughout 1983 and 1984, however, the ground was imperceptibly changing beneath their feet And, conflict within the Joint Chiefs themselves led to a strengthening of the reform movements positions

By the summer of 1985 fundamental changes had occurred to undercut the status quo and generate the consensus necessary for significant change First, General David

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<sup>18</sup> Lehman, John "Let's Stop Trying to Be Prussians" *The Washington Post*, June 10 1984

<sup>19</sup> Smith, pp 194-200

C Jones, near the end of his tour as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1982, “ added his name to the list of critics and advocates for defense reform ”<sup>20</sup> No longer could the reformers be isolated and dismissed as defense outsiders or think tank political scientists While Jones did not provide many original positions within the reform debate, he lent it important credibility at a critical point in time<sup>21</sup>, and refocused the reform debate on the Chiefs from one of whether they should be abolished to how best to administratively reform the office to provide the best possible military advice and counsel Further, General Edward C Meyer’s reasoned and informed advocacy of reform positions<sup>22</sup> , which occurred during the middle of his tour as Army Chief of Staff, weakened an already seriously divided Executive branch seemingly beset by intractable conflicts in Central America and the Persian Gulf, while retired General William Westmoreland’s support<sup>23</sup> added additional credibility within Army circles It was becoming increasingly obvious to the public and informed elites alike that single-service operations were prescriptions for failure, perceptions dramatically underscored by spectacular failure in the Middle East amidst the carnage of Lebanon and startling fumbles in Grenada which only served to further highlight the seeming inability of military command to successfully cope with joint operations

Unfortunately, the traditional Navy desire for service autonomy and concomitant resistance to elevating the position of the Chairman was often seen as yet another example of mere service parochialism, and resulted in the Navy’s political isolation,

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<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Wirls, p 86 Jones also published an article in *The New York Times Magazine* entitled “What’s Wrong with Our Defense Establishment?” in November, 1982, and remained active and involved after retirement

<sup>22</sup> Meyer, Edward C , Jr , “JCS Reorganization Why Change? How Much Change?” in *The Reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff A Critical Analysis* Washington Pergamon Brassey’s, 1986, pp 53-60 His views here are those enlarged upon after he left the service, this volume was published immediately after passage of the Act and summarizes key positions in the debate over the JCS

<sup>23</sup> Diehl, James A , “The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act Quo Vadis?” Special Collections, Washington, D C National Defense University Library, Fort Lesley J McNair, Washington, D C

even within the Joint Chiefs of Staff themselves, from the momentum gathering for JCS reform. For the period between 1981 and early 1985, however, critical Navy allies within the Congress such as Senators John Tower and John Warner held the reformers at bay<sup>24</sup>

The reformers were undeterred, however, and continued their efforts toward achievement of their goals. For example, the 1983 Marine Barracks bombing in Beirut crystallized Representative Bill Nichol's interest and determination to improve command relationships in the military, and he joined forces with key HASC staffer and ex-Air Force Colonel Archie Barrett to work towards such goals.

Lending weight to the reformers' arguments were a plethora of books, magazine articles and studies by a wide ranging group of intellectuals, military officers and opportunists<sup>25</sup> advocating reform of the military.

But, more importantly, the Congress had changed. In what was termed an "unprecedented jolt"<sup>26</sup> to the seniority system within the House of Representatives, Les Aspin (D-Wis) replaced Representative Mel Price (D-IL) as head of the House Armed Services Committee in 1985, while Senator Barry Goldwater (R-Az) assumed leadership of the influential Senate Armed Services Committee from Senator John Tower (R-Tex). Aspin was expected to be an active committee leader and challenge defense programs "far more vigorously and frequently than his two predecessors<sup>27</sup>", but as it would turn out, Senator Goldwater was even more important to passage of the Act which now bears his name, because he represented a major shift in leadership style from the rigidly pro-Reagan Tower and a more Air-Force oriented viewpoint from that of the Navy-oriented

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid*

<sup>25</sup> Wirls, pp 80-101

<sup>26</sup> Anon, *The Almanac of Seapower 1985* Arlington: Navy League of the United States, 1985, pp 81-83

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*

Tower<sup>28</sup> Reform initiatives which received a sympathetic hearing in the House now could conceivably get a hearing in the Senate. The tide had indeed turned in the Congress.

And finally, the reformers had succeeded in capturing the attention of the public and the Congress with the enormous cost and waste inherent in the defense buildup. The pressure for procurement reform was intense, and provided a means for the Congress to act together, in consensus, against such waste, while ensuring public support for incumbent members. The reform movement provided the perfect venue - a way to be both in favor of defense the buildup and in favor of defense reform. The attraction was irresistible, and ensured growing numbers of members of Congress joined the Caucus.

Beginning in the fall of 1984 the House Armed Services Committee took action and convened hearings into the issues of procurement fraud. The hearings threatened to take Congressional control of the administration's defense initiatives by rapidly generating legislative action to curtail waste fraud and abuse while addressing other military reform issues - such as reform of the JCS. The Senate Armed Services Committee did likewise. Procurement fraud provided the necessary catalyst for action on a wide range of military reform initiatives and kept the defense department offguard, while the positions incubated within the Reform Caucus during the more visible and divisive political battles over the nuclear freeze and Star Wars issues now came into their own. Publication of influential and widely respected studies heralding the necessity for military reform also contributed to the growing sense that the time had arrived for legislative action, and contributed to the consensus on the type of action necessary.<sup>29</sup> Legislative action then developed quickly, expedited by a perfectly natural desire within

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<sup>28</sup> Anon, "Armed Services Panel: Goldwater in the Cockpit" *Congressional Quarterly*, February 16, 1985, p. 297. This article reported that Goldwater's leadership in the Senate and Aspin's in the House confronted the administration with a less-certain political outlook *as it approached tough battles on the budget, MX, and other defense issues* (my emphasis). Goldwater was an Air Force Brigadier General, although he was certainly acting from strength of conviction on the issue of Pentagon reform.

<sup>29</sup> Diehl, p. 15.

the Congress for action to assuage angry taxpayers and voters as well as a generally unstated desire on the part of the Armed Services Committees under new leadership to take back the initiative on such issues earlier forfeited to the dynamic military reform caucus

The 99th Congress' action and initiatives on military reform and the defense budget provide an interesting point-counterpoint with administration actions to slow public and Congressional interest in military reform while retaining Congressional support of administration budget initiatives. While space here permits only a brief review of the individual actions, it is interesting to note that it appears as though JCS command reforms got wrapped up in the larger issue of Presidential-Congressional relations, a not-surprising result given the interests of the day, with the end result of achievement of both Presidential budget goals and Congressional military reform goals. As has been seen, however, the major work and legislative preparation was completed not on the floor of the House or the Senate, but in the reform caucus, report generation, committee hearings, committee leadership actions, and one on one lobbying at all levels of involved government. What happened on the floor, as evidenced by the lopsided votes on major reform legislative issues, merely confirmed what happened elsewhere.

The President moved to blunt Congressional momentum in June 1985 when he appointed David Packard to head a commission to recommend solutions to the ongoing procurement fraud scandals. While it was charged at the time that the Packard Commission was packed with military officers and defense contractor support, what was generally misunderstood outside the Washington arena was that the panel was in fact packed by military reform advocates<sup>30</sup>. The presidential portfolio provided to the commission was broad and far reaching, which enabled the panel to investigate and recommend solutions to a wide range of defense problems, was an obvious attempt to

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<sup>30</sup> Wirls, p. 188

take back the budget initiative seized by Congress through the ongoing committee hearings on procurement fraud which proved to be a significant source of frustration and embarrassment to the defense department and threatened to undermine the consensus behind the President's defense budgets. The purpose of the Panel " was to show the administration's sincerity on reform (and enable the administration to) quell Congressional concerns and preempt more radical reforms "31

Congressional hearings, first by the House and then by the Senate Armed Services Committees, generated a good deal of publicity during the fall of 1985 and resulted in numerous bills to address the reform initiatives. Release of an extensive staff study by the Senate Armed Services Committee<sup>32</sup> further strengthened the MRC cause, but subverted military reform caucus initiatives by bringing them into the venue of the Armed Service committees, only a few members of which were members of the military reform caucus <sup>33</sup> As it developed, H R 3622, sponsored by Representative Nichols (himself a military veteran) and designed to reorganize the JCS, provided the compromise vehicle for other similar Congressional reform actions. Its passage November 20, 1985 on a vote of 383-27 despite strong objections by SecDef Weinberger<sup>34</sup> provided ample indication of the strength of the reformers positions <sup>35</sup> Opposition, such as it was, was led on the House floor by Charles E. Bennet (D-Fla), who warned that passage of the proposal would reduce civilian control of the military, stating "What Secretary of Defense or even President would find it possible to repeatedly overrule the single-voice

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<sup>31</sup> Wiris, p. 188

<sup>32</sup> Snider, Don M., "DOD Reorganization Part I, New Imperatives" *Parameters*, September 1987, p. 69. This report was the Staff Report of the Senate Armed Services Committee entitled "Defense Organization: The Need For Change", which, although it espoused MRC positions, reestablished the primacy of the H/SASC's on such defense-related issues.

<sup>33</sup> Wiris, p. 190

<sup>34</sup> Anon, "Weinberger Retreats on Joint Chiefs Reform" *Congressional Quarterly*, Dec 7, 1985, p. 2570

<sup>35</sup> Anon, "House Approves Bill to Boost Role of Joint Chiefs Chairman" *Congressional Quarterly*, November 23, 1986, pp. 2437-2438

recommendation of the entire military establishment?"<sup>36</sup> , words that presaged the as-yet muted debate over civilian control of the military ongoing today

The Senate, however, convened hearings on November 14, 1985 to consider more drastic reforms, which advocated abolishment of the JCS and replacement with a joint advisory council. During the hearings, broad support was indicated in the Senate for reforms similar to that expressed in the House <sup>37</sup>. Earlier, Senator Nunn, a dominant minority member of the Senate Armed Services Committee<sup>38</sup> , indicated that reorganization issues were the committee's "top priority for the remainder of the year" and indicated his support for action for as much time as was needed in 1986 <sup>39</sup>.

The strength of the military reformers and broad Congressional support indicated by House and Senate actions caused SecDef Weinberger to move away from vehement opposition to reformer's positions and endorse, albeit in a limited way, several moves that would strengthen the Chairman's position on the JCS<sup>40</sup>. It had been earlier speculated that Weinberger's opposition may have actually enhanced the reformer's positions.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, led by Senator Goldwater, took up consideration of S 2295 at virtually the same time but after relatively little debate on alternate reorganization plans, reported the bill to the Senate.

The Packard Committee provided an interim report in February of 1986 while the Congress was wrestling with budget issues, foreshadowing its final report in June, a report which was quickly endorsed by the President - including approval of JCS.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> CQ, December 7, 1985, p 2570

<sup>38</sup> Anon, "Sam Nunn: The Careful Exercise of Power" *Congressional Quarterly*, June 14, 1986, pp1329-1333

<sup>39</sup> Anon, "Revamping the Pentagon's 'Corporate Board'" *Congressional Quarterly*, August 24 1985, p 1679

<sup>40</sup> Ibid



reorganization reforms<sup>41</sup> - as a way of reestablishing administration primacy over defense budgetary issues JCS reform was essentially a completed action at that point, lacking only final legislative authority

The Senate took up consideration of S 2295 on May 7 1986, after extensive committee work by Senator Goldwater and Senator Sam Nunn At this point, after all the work on the Senate version of the bill, Goldwater scrapped his bill in favor of Senate adoption of the House bill, H R 3622, and, in a measure of the respect in which the Senate held Goldwater, a senior, well-respected Senator with extensive military background, unanimously passed the measure the same day in an action widely viewed as a legacy in his honor<sup>42</sup> It was a legislative triumph for the reformers, JCS reform was on it's way, and final actions by the Packard Commission and the Congress were practically anticlimactic

The Packard Commission provided a final report in June of 1986 that not only advocated defense procurement reform, but continued on and advocated reform of the Joint Chiefs of Staff command structure, goals long favored by congressional and military reform advocates The findings of the commission were quickly adopted by the administration and published as NSDD-219 despite the determined opposition of the sitting JCS<sup>43</sup>, an action which may have diverted general public attention from ongoing Congressional action and interest in addressing procurement reform in order to regain the legislative initiative<sup>44</sup> , but which diverted no one's attention in the Congress over the final outcome of the reformer's initiatives

Final action by Congressional conference committees on August 13, 1986, Senate agreement on September 13, 1986 and House agreement to the conference report

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<sup>41</sup> Wirls, pp 188-192

<sup>42</sup> Wilson, George C "Goldwater is Right, Colleagues Say" *The Washington Post*, May 10, 1986

<sup>43</sup> Diehl, p 16

<sup>44</sup> my opinion

September 17, 1986 resulted in the bill's clearance to the White House on September 17th. The Senate's signature of the measure September 19th and presentation to the President that same day presaged the President's signature on October 1, 1986 and the measure's passage into public law 99-433, the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.<sup>45</sup>

The background to this historic act provides a clear proof of the importance of studying the bureaucratic process method while convincingly underscoring the necessity for those individuals involved in the process of government and national security matters to understand both the Constitution and the American method of power politics.

Additionally, a study of the development of this act will lead inevitably to a better understanding of the growing discussion over civilian control of the military, and of the evolving relationship between the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Chiefs of Staff themselves, the military services, and the Secretary of Defense. These issues are central to understanding modern issues of defense leadership.

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<sup>45</sup> Internet Thomas service, accessed November 24, 1997